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TAGS: OPRC KMDR KPAO TW ESTH

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: CHINA'S SPACE PROGRAM/AVIAN FLU

¶1. Summary: Major Chinese-language Taipei dailies centered their coverage October 20 on DPP Legislator Lin Cho-shui's proposal to trim the budget for the financial support of former presidents and vice presidents- [limiting the timeframe to 10 years of public support for former presidents, and recalling financial support for former vice presidents.]

¶2. Newspaper editorials commented on China's space policy and avian flu. The centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" said China is not yet a "super power" in space and would most possibly focus the development of space business in the fields of observation, communications, and positioning.

¶3. The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" called upon the WHO to put human lives before politics, and allow Taiwan become a member state in order to fight hand-in-hand against avian flu. The pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" said Taiwan should use the APEC mechanism to contribute to the research and development of avian flu vaccines, and added that Taiwan officials should let the public understand the danger of bird flu. End summary.

A) "The Success of the Shenzhou XI Would Not Lead to Global Competition in Space"

The centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] editorialized (10/20):

". A more objective statement is that China has become a major power, but not a superpower, in space via the Shenzhou XI project. The so-called 'major power in space' means that a country could independently design and complete a space project of certain scale, and China has obviously crossed this threshold. A 'superpower in space,' however, needs strong and solid industrial and economic foundations. . Comparing with the United States and Russia, China still falls far behind.

". China started to develop space business in 1956 out of military concerns, i.e. developing rockets means developing guided-missiles. Regarding satellites, re-entry remote sensing satellites with reconnaissance capabilities were the biggest part. After China adopted the 'reform and open' policy [in 1979], China's space business was obviously aimed at facilitating economic development. China's thinking is to industrialize space technology and promote its applications. . The most possible direction for development should be focused on observation, communications, and positioning in order to support [China's] joint operations. In the foreseeable future, it is burdensome and unnecessary for China to move toward 'militarization in the space'

B) "Health Politics and Halting Bird Flu"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (10/20):

". Taiwanese, like everyone else in the world, are concerned about the spread of this disease. But as Taiwan is not a member of the World Health Organization (WHO) - because of China's incessant political interference - it is excluded from the global disease prevention and control network. As a result, it can only seek help indirectly from other WHO member nations. This makes a mockery of the WHO's humanitarian and sans frontier claims. It also poses a threat to the Taiwanese population, and leaves open a loophole in the international public health network.

"Whether looked at from the perspective of Taiwan's basic rights to healthcare or global disease prevention, we can never allow the nightmare of our near-solidary fight against the SARS epidemic in 2003 to happen again.

"Instead, the WHO should accept Taiwan's allocation to become an observer nation. Human lives must be put before politics."

C) "Everyone Responsible for preventing Avian Flu"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" [circulation: 20,000] said in its editorial (10/20): "Therefore, our country should take the opportunity offered by the upcoming meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Pusan, South Korea to propose cross-border cooperation to research and develop effective vaccines.

"If we are able to promote the successful development and production of effective vaccines through the APEC mechanism, Taiwan will have made a major contribution to global society.

". Official efforts to raise awareness are especially critical, given Taiwan's geographic location as a key stop on the migration paths of various types of birds in East Asia and its role as a nesting and breeding spot in the autumn for birds flying from the north from northeast China, Siberia, the Korean peninsula and Japan to Southeast Asia or the South China Sea. ."

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